



Goodbye to Carnival 2006

The traditional end to the series of events that made up Carnival 52 for 2006 occurred in Oranjestad last night with the midnight Burning of King Momo. Several of the populace, including a number of island visitors joined the reigning queens, Princes and Pachos, and Carnival band Youth Extreme for one final march through Oranjestad to the field across from the Boulevard Valero Station, where an effigy of King Momo was cast aflame to the cheers of the crowd. This tradition has various significance from island to island, for example in St. Maarten, the Burning of Momo signifies the cleansing of the islands sins, with the hope that he brings a blessing and good luck for the rest of the year. In Aruba, it has come to mean the burning of the Spirit of Carnival, only to rise like a phoenix from the ashes when Tecla Kelly, the President of SAC) bangs down her gavel on the 11th hour, of the 11th day of the 11th month later this year. On November 11, 2006 at 11 am, she will declare Carnival 53 officially open, and the entire process will begin again. It is an event that receives the same media coverage and is deemed as important in Aruba as the President's State of the Union Speech in the U.S.

At the stroke of midnight the torch was touched to a Momo that was reluctant to leave this year's Carnival, as it was such an exciting and beautiful event, but with some coaxing, he finally did, creating quite a sight. It was an appropriate ending to the months of planning, work and execution that is the spectacle that is Carnival, and marks the beginning of Ash Wednesday, and a solemn time, Lent, known locally as "Quarisma."